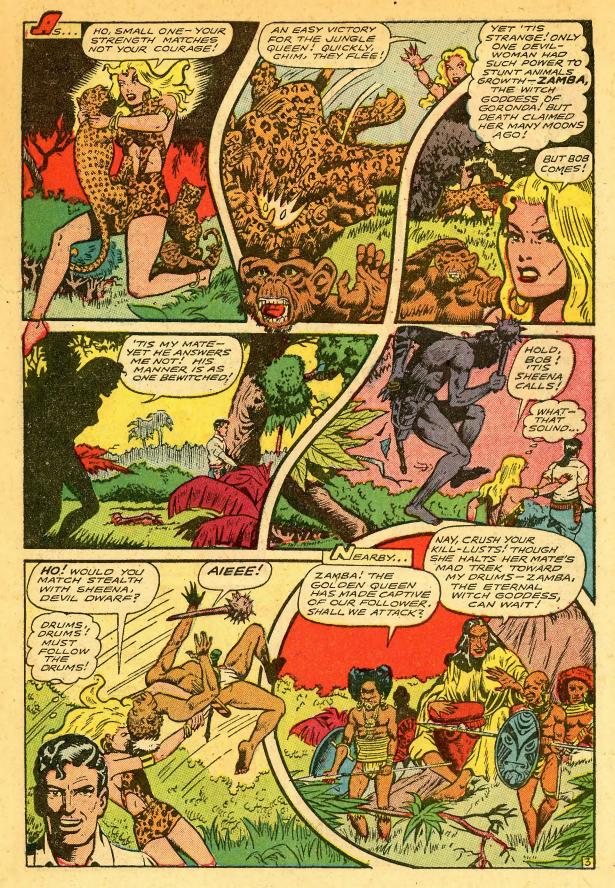


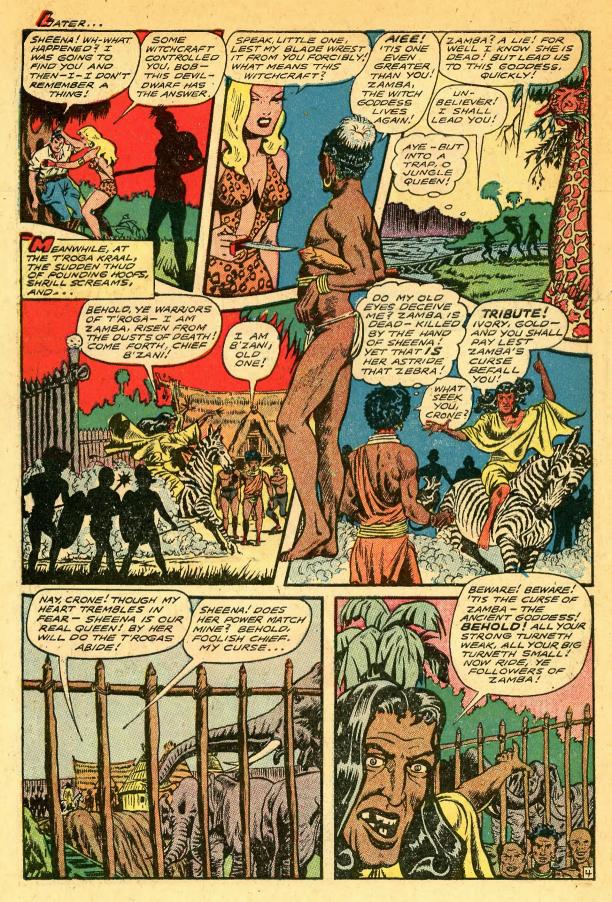


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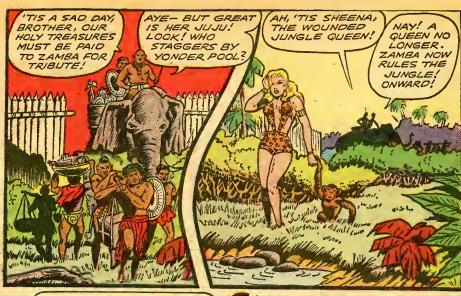


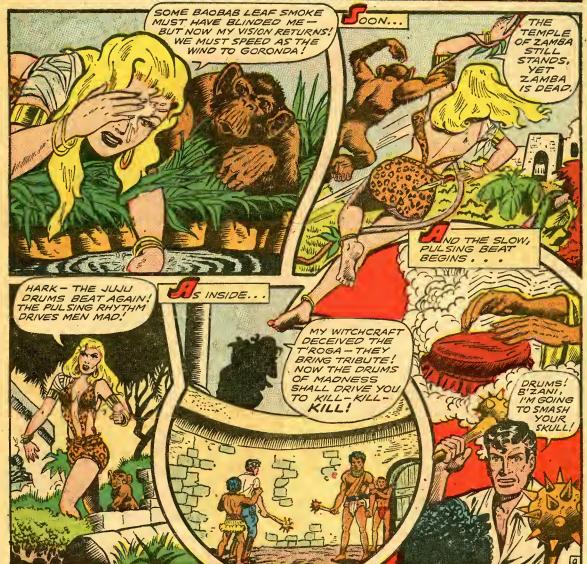


































NIGHT ATTACK

By Henry Wysham Lanier

THE corsairs of Morocco, Algiers, Tripoli, and Tunis had for centuries been the scourge of Mediterranean commerce. It is true that at the close of our Revolution, England and France were paying them yearly tribute for safety, and Spain had bought them off for three million dollars cash.

But when one reads of an American Congress answering the insolent demands of Deys and Bashaws by sending over ransom and tribute money, stores, and even a warship, with humble apologies for delay, the most peace-loving citizen feels that under such conditions war becomes a duty.

Our abject attitude toward these pirates had the natural results. Not only did we pay them more than the million dollars which we were not willing to invest in the necessary war-ships, but our seamen were still slain and imprisoned, our flag and officers were openly insulted, our commerce was broken up, and our name became a thing of contempt.

And as a final touch we had to build the ships and go to war after all.

One result was the founding of the Navy Department in 1798, together with the completion of the Constitution, the Constellation, and the United States. In 1801 open war came with Tripoli, and the first blow was struck when Sterrett in the Enterprise captured the Tripoli after a savage battle. The war dragged on. In October, 1803, came a disaster.

One morning the *Philadelphia*, one of the best frigates in our little navy, was cruising on her station when she sighted a large Tripolitan xebec standing in for the bay, Bainbridge made sail and chased her. Driving along under full sail, firing her bowguns and sounding as she went, the *Philadelphia* pursued hotly. But all of a sudden the water shoaled. There was a terrific shock. To his chagrin, the American captain found himself hard and fast on a hidden reef.

The town was less than three miles away.

No other ships of the squadron were in sight. Presently nine Turkish gunboats sped toward the doomed ship out of the harbor.

Bainbridge tried every expedient possible. With anchors cut from the bow, guns run aft and then cast overboard, mainmast cut away, water-casks broached, hold pumped out, he strove to get his vessel afloat. All was in vain. So the magazine was flooded, the ship scuttled, the flag came down.

The crew were captured, ill-treated, and imprisoned. The frigate was dragged from the reef and anchored in triumph under the fort's guns. It was a sad day for the new navy of the United States.

So bitter was the recollection, that Bainbridge wrote Commodore Preble, suggesting a cutting-out expedition to destroy the ship. She was heavily manned; a hundred guns frowned down on her from the castle; a swarm of Tripolitan gunboats surrounded her. But when the idea was broached in the squadron, so many officers clamored for the chance that lots had to be cast.

The lucky man was a young lieutenant, Stephen Decatur, Jr., whose father had captured the first privateer in the scattering war with France. Picking eighty men from the eager crowd of volunteers, among them Lieutenant James Lawrence and Midshipman James Macdonough, Decatur set out in a small ketch on the night of February 16, 1804. Her hold was full of explosives and fire materials. He had secured a pilot who knew the harbor and spoke the language like a native. The order was death to any man who made a noise or used any weapon but cold steel.

Silently the little boat stole into the harbor in the darkness:

It was nearly midnight when she swung under the bows of the *Philadelphia*, whose black hulk loomed up far above her. All about were the lights of the gunboats. Other lights against a vague blur beyond marked the castle, whose heavy guns were ready to

send them to the bottom, or blow them into the air, in the twinkling of an eye if the alarm were once given. It was the crisis of the expedition; not much imagination was needed to fancy the result if their first greeting was a shot into that death-stored hull; every man aboard the ketch felt the thrill and the terrific strain of waiting.

But not a sound was made as the little craft drifted like a ghost toward the quiet frigate. Only half a dozen of the party, and these disguised, were on deck, the rest being out of sight below.

A sentinel hailed her: "What ship is that?"

The pilot answered glibly: she was a trader from Malta. They had been through a gale and had lost their anchors. To avoid running foul of something, they wanted to moor to the frigate till morning. Cunningly he went on to describe such a cargo as proved irresistible to sailor fancy. The Tripolitan officer was more than willing to have this mouse stay by the cat till daylight.

At this moment a puff of wind took the ketch aback. She began to drift away from the frigate. Discovery seemed imminent.

Calmly Decatur ordered two men into a boat, to carry a line to the frigate's fore-chains. Then the crew warped her vigorously up alongside.

Nearer and nearer she came, and as the moment approached the assailants began to prepare for their rush. When there was still quite a space left between the two vessels, a Tripolitan, who had been watching out of a port-hole, caught a glimpse of men in uniform aboard the peaceful trader.

"Americanos! Americanos!" he shouted.

Another on deck ran forward with his cutlass raised.

"Pull, men! Pull for your lives!" commanded the American officers.

The Yankees put their backs to the work like a tug-of-war team. The Turk cut the rope with one blow. But that last sturdy effort had done the job. The ketch moved slowly up alongside her prey.

"Boarders away!" called Decatur, leaping across into the *Philadelphia's* rigging. The men followed in one surge, like a great human wave. There was not a cheer or a

shot, but, cutlass in hand, they swept the decks. In ten minutes the Turks were cut down or had leaped overboard. The *Philadelphia* was momentarily back under the Stars and Stripes.

Now came the real test. A line was formed. With orderly speed, the combustibles were passed up from the ketch, placed about according to an exact diagram, and set on fire.

Fifteen minutes sufficed. The party assigned to the berth-deck had to run the gauntlet as they sorambled up again. When Decatur reassembled his gallant eighty on board the ketch, the frigate was bursting into flames forward, astern, and amidships.

Off stood the adventurers on their perilous return trip. Every gunboat in range opened upon them as the frigate's funeral pyre lit up the scene. The castle's heavy gun thundered away and splashed buckets of water over them, the while they bent to the oars. Even the poor old frigate hurled out shot after them as the flames bit into her vitals.

Every moment they expected her magazine to explode and crush or fire them as the debris rained down. On they rowed, while the mounting flames lit up the confusion like a scene on the stage.

And then as the fierce conflagration made it evident their success was complete, the rowers stopped short. Three rousing cheers resounded in the ears of the infuriated enemy. Bending to their oars again, the Americans swept their ketch away to safety, while the *Philadelphia* with a mighty roar vanished into charred timbers and wreckage.

Without losing a man, Decatur returned to receive the rank of captain and a sword from Congress, as fitting acknowledgments of one of the most dashing cutting-out exploits on record.

Eleven years later, having won a succession of laurels in the War of 1812, and having just captured the largest corsair warship, this same Stephen Decatur stood on the quarter-deck of his flag-ship and received the submission of the Dey of Algiers to a treaty insuring reparation and future freedom from attack—which marked the ending for all time of pirate tribute or ransom from the United States.















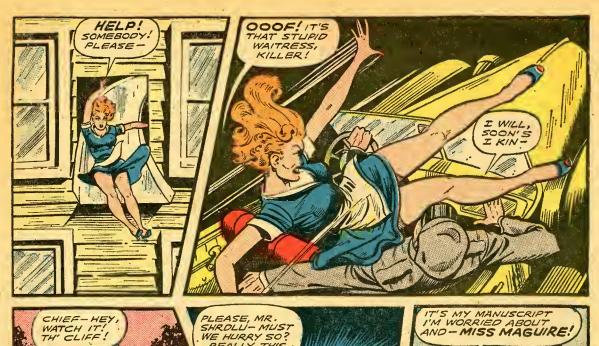
















Miami Beach, Fla.

Dear Editor:

Just a few lines to let vou—and Mr. W. Morgan
Thomas—know how much SHEENA is appreciated by
the fellows in my neighborhood. Super! Keep up the
good work. Just now she seems to be causing more
comment than the recent hurricanes. Unfortunately,
I didn't become acquainted with the Jungle Queen
until a year ago. I haven't missed a single installment since that time and certainly don't intend to in
the future. I'm a bit older than the average comic
reader, but SHEENA doesn't seem quite like a reader, but SHEENA doesn't seem quite like a comic strip. Rather a play or movie, full of niystery and suspense and fast, hard hitting action. The other features in your magazine are good, but SHEENA is the reason I buy it month after month. That's about all I have to say. Thanks for a very interesting feature.

Charles "Buddy" Rosen

Covington, Kentucky

Dear Editor:

I like your comic best of all on the newsstands. I like everything about it and don't think I would like it if there were any changes made. Keep up the good work,

Patty Jean Carter

Truro, N. S., Canada

Just started reading your book a little while ago I Just started reading your book a little while ago but I have read all I can find which is quite a large number. I like SHEENA and THE HAWK best and next comes GHOST GALLERY. I wish you could make GHOST GALLERY scarier because it is a little tame now. I agree with V. W. Hitt, that THE HAWK should pay more attention to Velvet. I would, ZX-5 is good, but let him lose that cane for good, will you? SKY GIRL is not so hot. No one on this agest was granter like she does. earth would make those wise-cracks like she does.

I like your letter page a lot. I wish that Bob would find himself a leopard skin like SHEENA's, Yours for more SHEENA and Velvet.

David Peet

Dear Editor:

Russel Hicks and Morris Seigel are both crazy, arguing about what SHEENA Fan Club is the oldest and biggest. I'll bet there are a hundred SHEENA Fan Clubs in New York bigger than either of theirs. She's our club mascot.

Mickey O'Flaherty

Midland, Michigan

Dear Sirs:

I enjoy your comic very much. I think you could add a little more adventure to SHEENA and GHOST GALLERY and leave out STUART TAYLOR and add more rough fighting to THE HAWK. Please try to improve SKY GIRL and ZX-5. Thank you very much. I try to read every issue of your comic and think it is a help in my studies.

Patsy Smith

Benton Harbor, Michigan

Dear Editor:

I like your book very much. SHEENA is my favor-I like your book very much. SHEENA is my favorite. Why don't you have SKY GIRL meet a cute
man and have her like him and not be so crazy?
Tell Maisy Brown if she doesn't like THE HAWK
she doesn't have to read him. I think THE HAWK
should pay more attention to Velvet. I think all of
the stories are very, very good. From one of your readers,

Joyce Phillips

Germantown, N. Y.

Dear Editor:

I think your comic stinks. It is the worst on the wouldn't think of wasting my money on your book. Our club voted not to read it. Larry Snyder

Oak Ridge, Tennessee

Dear Editor:

Yours is a very excellent magazine. My favorites are 1) SHEENA, 2) GHOST GALLERY, and 3) THE HAWK. SKY GIRL ought to lose herself. STU TAYLOR should take a trip to far-off Pluto and misplace that dopey time machine for a couple of centuries. ZX-5's cane does more than ZX-5 himself. Let that guy take a trip with his cane. Outside of that you've not a swell magazine. that you've got a swell magazine.

Donald Fanning

Chicago, Illinois

Dear Editor:

If I could be any character in your book, I'd be
Drew Murdoch because ghost stories are my favorite. I like GHOST GALLERY best. Keep it in.

Malvin Johnson Melyin Johnson

That's all that space will allow this month. What would you do if you were editor? What character would you rather be if you had your choice? This is your pags in your magazine. Let's have your

The Editor





























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